



**Top Stories**

**Israeli Labor Party leaves government; early election ahead**

A convention of the Israeli Labor Party in Tel Aviv decided on Sunday to pull its ministers out of the coalition government with the Likud Party of prime minister Ariel Sharon.

**60th anniversary of Nuremberg trials marked**



The city of Nuremberg has marked the 60th anniversary of the opening of the trials against Nazi

war criminals.

**Featured story**

**U.S. government proposes removing Yellowstone grizzlies from endangered species list**



The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has announced that

"The greater Yellowstone area population of grizzly bears ... is now recovered."

**Wikipedia Current Events**

- The Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon announces his resignation from Likud and his intention to form a new party, and asks the President of Israel to call a general election.
- At least forty people died following a series of Insurgent and American led attacks.

**Wikipedia Current Events**

• Five Iraqi civilians, including three children, are shot dead by US Troops as they approached a checkpoint in Baquba. The minibus they were traveling in failed to stop as it approached a roadblock.

**Whaling fleet heads to Antarctic Sanctuary for minke whale meat**

The Japanese whaling fleet is reportedly heading into the seas around Antarctica, drawing widespread condemnation from campaigners. Japan's fleet of six ships left the port of Shimonoseki, western Japan with a quota of 940 minke whales and 10 fin whales.

Calls for the Australian government to intervene have been rejected by the environment minister, Senator Ian Campbell. Japan's whaling program, which is claimed to be for scientific purposes, is expected to kill nearly one thousand whales this season.

"Japan's attempt to dress up its commercial whaling as science is an insult to modern science," said International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Director of Wildlife and Habitat. "It's time for the Japanese Government to respect the rest of the world - It's time to stop whaling." A Greenpeace statement dismisses the assertion of the Japanese government that whales are contributing to the collapse of fish stocks.

Senator Rachel Siewrt, spokesperson on marine matters

for the Green Party said, "Mr Campbell can't answer a simple question on whether or not the Government plans to take any one of a number of legal and diplomatic actions open to it."

Legal action open to the Australian government includes invoking provisional measures under the auspices of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. These measures would — in effect — be an injunction preventing whaling from being started within the 14 days following.

In December, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society will engage the Japanese whaling fleet in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. The Sea Shepherds say the Japanese whale kill is illegal. They will be acting in accordance with the United Nations World Charter for Nature in their intervention. The groups objective is to "hunt down the Japanese whaling fleet and harrass, block, obstruct, and intervene against their illegal whaling operations."

According to Sea Shepherd: "The Japanese are violating the Southern Ocean Sanctuary. They are violating the International Whaling Commission moratorium on commercial whaling. They are targeting endangered fin and humpback whales that are protected under the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna. They are also in violation of the Australian laws protecting the Australian Antarctic Territorial waters."

International Fund for Animal

Welfare condemns what it calls a "mass killing program — a defiance of international criticism and a global ban on commercial whaling — as commercial whaling disguised as science." IFAW urges the Australian Government to take Japan to the international courts to bring this program to an immediate halt.

Japan will kill over 900 minke whales and ten fin whales during the next six months as part of its whaling program, JAPRA II, marking a sharp escalation in Japan's whaling activities. "It is a dark day for some of the world's most magnificent creatures. Let's be under no illusion—this is commercial whaling in disguise. The Australian Government must respond swiftly by taking legal action to stop the boats in their tracks," said IFAW Marine Campaigner Darren Kindleysides.

Leading international law expert, Professor Don Rothwell, has advised IFAW that the Japanese Government is breaching international laws with JARPA II. He has advised that the Australian Government has very strong grounds to take Japan to in the International Law of the Sea to stop "scientific" whaling. Japan is targeting whales that are listed as endangered.

He argues that Japan's plans to double its whale take are an abuse of its legal right. "The number of whales that Japan purports to take is not commensurate with the number of whales that would be necessary to engage in scientific research," he said. "There's also increasing evidence that non-lethal means can be used to take data from whales to obtain information about whaling stocks."

### **Under-reporting of human Bird Flu infections poses worldwide threat**

Under reporting of bird flu infections in China and other Southeast Asian countries gives the whole world a sense that human infections are quite limited. The press frequently reports that fewer than 130 people have been infected with H5N1 avian flu and under 70 have died worldwide. These numbers may give a false sense of security, because there are enormous problems getting accurate data, especially in a country like China with a billion + population.

"Reporting a suspected bird flu infection in bird or humans is a very unlikely event," said Dr. Shoshana Zimmerman of the eHealth Institute. She is also a founder of [birdflubeacon.com](http://birdflubeacon.com), a site dedicated to bird flu issues. "There are very few incentives to report, and lots of reasons to refrain from reporting. From the viewpoint of a local rural small farmers, there is little to be gained and much to be lost by reporting an infection. The worse threat is that their flocks could be culled (killed) leaving them destitute."

There are many factors which mitigate against reporting bird or human infections of bird flu. Farmers are used to chickens, ducks and birds dying all the time. Even when a large number die at one time they may see no purpose in reporting the deaths. When a human dies in locations with little or no medical services, discovering the cause of death may not be at the top of a rural farmer's list of priorities. In rural areas most people are not taken to hospitals when they are sick. Bird flu symptoms are not widely

known. If symptoms are not recognized, farmers certainly won't know when to report possible bird or human infections. Confirming bird flu infections is costly, difficult and time consuming. A sample must be properly collected, and there has to be a way to ship to one of approximately 200 laboratories worldwide. Then there is a two week waiting period for test results. This can be prohibitively expensive, especially for poor countries.

Countries which report large scale outbreaks can expect to experience widespread panic and economic loss, as occurred with SARS. There is little incentive to do this.

"These factors can be seen at work in the way that the first bird flu death was reported in China," Dr. Zimmerman stated.

A young woman, Zhou Maoya, died when she returned to home to the village of Yantan in Annui province to prepare for her wedding. Her family said they did not take her to the hospital because they thought it would not do any good. But officials noted rural Chinese also often cite relatively expensive medical costs as a reason for not seeking treatment when sick.

Initially Chinese authorities attributed her death to pneumonia. Under intense political pressure, China invited the World Health Organization to send experts to investigate. The Chinese authorities then changed their position, attributing her death to bird flu because her reported symptoms matched those of bird flu.

The village was quarantined and journalists were denied access so

it is not known how many others might be infected in the village. Official announcements were made of plans to vaccinate and cull birds.

Fan Tan, a local official, told AFP news that 1,000 birds in Yantan had been culled (killed). Plans were announced to vaccinate 2 million poultry in the area, a huge and difficult task.

Zhang, another official, said authorities had met with all villagers to give them flu vaccinations and to tell them how to protect themselves against the bird flu virus, including not consuming poultry products. It is known that flu vaccinations do not protect against bird flu.

Villagers and local officials minimized the threat. In outlying areas of Yantan, residents said they knew of no new outbreaks. While formally supporting government slogans to control bird flu, possible infections have been attributed to other causes, without any testing for validation.

A woman who lost many ducks, chickens and a dog even attributed the death to hooligans. Fan Litan, a peasant woman from Fantu village, about 2 miles from Yantan, said her family had been extremely frightened when her dog and some of the 20 odd ducks as well as chickens she raised had suddenly died.

"We were scared to death," said Fan, standing next to a red sign posted on the outside of wall of her home that said: "Prevention and control by the masses is basic for people." But Fan explained that her birds did not have bird flu, rather some hooligan had poisoned them along with the dog. Fan said ducks and chickens are

all healthy but she admitted that she had stopped eating poultry. No testing of her birds was reported.

A local government official, Fan Qian, told AFP that it was believed Zhou was infected while she was outside of the province.

According to a recent AFP report from Liuchang, 59 miles south of Yantan, the obstacles to identifying infections are enormous.

Like many, one Liuchang villager named Wang Hemin said he was concerned and would keep a closer eye on his ducks and chickens, but felt no immediacy since the infection was not in his province. He learned about bird flu on TV, and is aware that officials have come to his village of 2,700 people to warn residents about the virus. They offered guidelines: they told people that poultry which die suddenly could have contracted bird flu and should not be eaten or sold and that such an incident should also immediately be reported. However, they neglected to describe what the symptoms of H5N1 bird flu actually were.

Residents do not know what symptoms to look for if poultry become ill -- fever, diarrhea, teary eyes and swelling in the legs of the birds. And there have been no reported bird vaccinations in this area, despite the pledge earlier in the week to vaccinate 2 million birds immediately. In another nearby village of 100, Nazahuang, chickens scuttle in and out of houses. One resident, Fan Jiexu, 73, said no officials had come to warn her village to take precautions. Throughout rural areas, it is customary to have chickens scuttle in and out of homes. Ducks and bird often die and when villagers think it is okay

they eat them.

The head of World Health Organization's China office, Henk Bekeadam, is aware that slow reaction to bird flu threats and difficulty monitoring poultry in the world's most populous country makes any kind of control of its spread challenging.

China has reported 17 avian flu outbreaks as of this week. While the Chinese government issues high alerts, critical information does not necessarily get to the rural villages that need the information most. The sheer size of the poultry population, the fact that it is normal for some poultry to die on farms, and that 70% of a poultry population is being kept in the backyard are factors that make infection control almost impossible.

The fact is that testing is required to confirm H5N1 virus, and a positive test results had led to the killing of nearby flocks. As can be seen from this one case, many villagers, officials, and even governments all have reasons to downplay the number of cases. Even when this is not the case, the medical, political and economic difficulties of confirming H5N1 are difficult to overcome. This may inevitably lead to under-reporting and that creates a potential threat to all of us.

### **Darwin and Sumatra rocked by offshore earthquakes**

An offshore earthquake shook buildings in Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory today, and an earthquake with a magnitude of at least 6.2 struck off the coast of Sumatra yesterday, triggering a tsunami alert.

Geoscience Australia says the offshore quake registered 5.3 on the Richter scale. No damage has been reported in the city of Darwin or the community of Port Keats which is the nearest town to the quake's epicentre in a region known for its moderate seismicity. The quake's epicentre was located 500 kilometres west-north-west of Darwin in the Banda Sea. The earthquake hit at 9.51am (CDT).

Geoscience Australia (the government's geological organisation) says the region may be unstable for a few days and aftershocks or another quake may be felt. Duty seismologist, Dr Svetan Sinadinovski, says it was a shallow quake and the subterranean make-up of the area allowed the tremor waves to travel to Darwin without losing much energy. He says the quake was on Australia's continental shelf, which is a common place for seismic activity.

"That is the area where Australian plate collides with Asian plate and that extends through the Indonesian islands up to Sumatra and Thailand in the north and east through PNG to Tonga and New Zealand," he said. "Preliminary reports point to a 5 to 6 in the Darwin region - this means that the earthquake would have been felt by almost everyone indoors according to the Modified Mercalli Scale which measures the impact of seismic waves on structures."

"People would have felt this earthquake up to 500km away from the epicentre, and we have heard numerous reports of residents in the Darwin area having felt the effects of the event," he said.

Among those who felt the quake were participants involved in the

trial of Bradley John Murdoch in the Northern Territory Supreme Court in Darwin - where chairs and TVs shook in the court building.

The Bureau of Meteorology's Darwin office was also shaken, but no reports of damage have been received by police.

"We felt it - I felt the building sway and some of the monitors shook a little," the bureau's duty forecaster, Billy Lynch, said. "We are on the third floor of a three-story building."

An earthquake with a magnitude of at least 6.2 struck off the coast of Sumatra yesterday, triggering a tsunami alert, officials said. There were no immediate reports of a tsunami, damages or casualties. The quake's epicenter was located off Simeulue, 160 miles southwest of Medan on Sumatra's northwest coast, according to the U.S. Geological Survey(USGS).

Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency put the quake's magnitude at 6.2, whilst the USGS said the magnitude was 6.5. The quake rocked nearby Nias island and was felt in Medan, said an official from the Indonesian agency's Jakarta office.

Simeulue island is near the epicenter of the December 26 quake that caused a massive tsunami. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii said there was no threat of a tsunami to Pacific coastlines, but quakes of this size can sometimes generate local tsunamis along coasts near the epicenter.

Sumatra has been affected by strong aftershocks since the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake. Experts say the fault line is unstable and may produce another massive

quake soon.

The biggest earthquake to strike the region, in 1998, had a magnitude of 6.9. The largest earthquake ever recorded was in Chile in 1960. This magnitude 9.5 earthquake resulted in the death of 5,000 people. In 1976 a smaller 8.0 earthquake in China caused the death of an estimated 255,000 people. More recently, in December 2003 an earthquake in Iran resulted in the death of approximately 50,000 people.

Geoscience Australia said the 5.3 quake did not generate a tsunami. The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, which had a magnitude of 9.0, triggered a series of lethal tsunamis on December 26, 2004 that killed over 270,000 people, making it the deadliest tsunami in recorded history.

In March 2005 another strong earthquake rocked parts of Darwin, with tremors lasting several minutes felt across the city and rural areas. The quake measured 7.2 on the Richter scale, and its epicentre was 500 kilometres east north-east of East Timor in the Banda Sea.

### **International exhibit of chair art starts in Canada**

The international entry mail art show SAT: An Exhibit of Chairs was put on display Friday in Brampton, Ontario, Canada. Held in the Fridge Front Gallery at the Shoppers World Brampton mall, SAT is a diverse collection of artworks focusing on a generally mundane object, the chair.

Works in the show range from realism to abstract, dadaism to surrealism, post-modern to collage.

While some of the entries were submitted directly to Visual Arts Brampton, most came from a previous exhibit. Organized by Pati Bristow, No place to rest, chairs you can't sit on ran at Shopping Trolley Gallery West and Seaman's Library at Foothill College, both in Los Altos Hills, California, earlier in 2005. Guest curator Nicholas Moreau was unaware of the similarly themed exhibit, so soon before. The theme for SAT was based on that of a 1987 juried art show organized by Visual Arts Brampton at the now-defunct Art Gallery of Brampton.

Works in Visual Arts Brampton's showing of the exhibition are from 17 countries including Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, Spain, Uruguay, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

This is Visual Arts Brampton's third mail art show. In 1999, Susan Williamson created The Great Canadian Mail Art Show for Artway at Bramalea City Centre; the show was so successful that the Art Gallery of Peel adopted it in 2001. The concept of a mail art show was revived in 2004 by Moreau, held at the new Artway Shoppers World. The Snail Mail World Postcard Art Show has been held annually since.

Visual Arts Brampton's Fridge Front Gallery primarily hosts artwork by youth from its kids classes, and from schools in Brampton and Oakville. In contrast, the nearby Artway Gallery hosts artwork by professional and amateur adult artists from across Peel. VAB has successfully sought permission to create a third display space in

Shoppers World, in the Zellers corridor. The space will host shows of mail art and works on paper year-round. The planned "World Art Gallery" will be the first ever permanent display space for mail art.

### **Myanmar Junta threatened with sanctions by UN body**

The UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) has warned the generals that make up the military government of Myanmar, more commonly known as Burma, that they may face sanctions should they not improve their record over forced labour.

The call to change policy and attitudes towards forced labour that the ILO issued following a meeting of their governing body in Geneva late last week was countered by promises from the regime that they would not withdraw from the organisation.

The warning issued by the ILO has been followed by calls from the EU for the Security Council and Secretary General of the UN to get involved in efforts to reform the country. The EU Parliament passed its resolution on Burma by a significant majority, only three members opposed and two abstained.

### **Sri Lankan president appoints fellow hardliner as PM**

The recently elected president of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapakse has upset some with the appointment of a fellow hardliner, Ratnasiri Wickremanayake as the country's Prime Minister. The Sinhala nationalist, Mr Wickremanayake is a former holder of the post during Chandrika Kumaratunga's presidency in 2000 and 2001.

Most noticeably hit by the news were the country's stock markets. Markets in Colombo fell 7% on the news, having fallen by the same amount last Friday when Mr Rajapaskse's election result was announced.

Mr Rajapakse was elected as the President on an anti Tamil Tiger platform. He formed an alliance with two Sinhala Buddhist extremist parties JVP and JMU. Civil war in the country between the majority and the Tamil population is claimed to have led to over 65,000 deaths since 1983.

### **Chaudhry's son marries Tui Lau descendant in Fiji**

Sachindra Chaudhry, the youngest son of Fiji Labour Party leader and former Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, married Marian Ma'afu, a descendant of Fiji's first Tui Lau Enele Ma'afu, in a Hindu ceremony at Wailailai Temple in Ba yesterday. A Christian wedding will follow at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Suva next week.

Intermarriage between Fiji's indigenous and Indian communities is uncommon. Speaking for the family, Chaudhry's elder brother, Rajendra, said that the union was for love and that nothing political should be read into it. The union was a personal love-match between two who had known each other for more than six years, he insisted, and dismissed media speculation that the wedding was intended as a statement about uniting the two races, whose historical, cultural, religious, and political divisions have defined Fiji for generations. It was a proud day for the family.

Ma'afu's ancestor, Enele Ma'afu, was a Tongan prince who was

exiled to Fiji following disagreements within the Tongan royal family. He conquered Taveuni and the Lau Islands, taking the title of Tui Lau (King of Lau). He later participated, with the Fijian King Cakobau, in the ceding of the islands to the United Kingdom in 1874. The Tui Lau title has since been held by such noted individuals as Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna (considered modern Fiji's first statesman) and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, independent Fiji's first Prime Minister and second President.

Chaudhry, who traces his ancestry to the state of Haryana, in north India, became the first of his race to be elected Prime Minister in 1999. He was deposed a year later, in the Fiji coup of 2000.

### Today in History

1830 - Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

1943 - Lebanon gained independence from France.

1963 - Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn-in as the 36th President of the United States aboard Air Force One (pictured) after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas.

1967 - United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 was adopted unanimously in the aftermath of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbours Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

1975 - Juan Carlos was declared King of Spain following the death of Francisco Franco.

November 22 is Independence Day (Lebanon)

### Quote of the Day

"O may I join the choir invisible of those immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence; live in pulses stirred to generosity, in deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn for miserable aims that end with self, in thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars, and with their mild persistence urge men's search to vaster issues." ~ George Eliot

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